

tribute to the late Richard Romero from the Inland Empire, a businessman, a philanthropist, a dreamer, a community leader. Richard was a pillar of the Inland Empire. From his humble beginning in New Mexico, Richard received great success in business and in life, but Richard's greatest satisfaction came from helping others.

Recently I talked to his wife, and she said that one of the most important things about Richard was that he cared about people in the community. He felt that it was important for people to learn about reading, writing and arithmetic. Richard touched the lives of many individuals in the community by giving unselfishly.

He rescued the University of Laverne from the brink of extinction; he turned it around and helped the University of Laverne in southern California. I know, because my son will be graduating from Laverne University on Saturday of this week, and I want to thank Richard for taking the leadership and helping the University of Laverne, a private institution.

Mr. Speaker, Richard Romero reached out and touched the lives of many individuals in the Inland Empire, contributing to a variety of programs to support education of the disadvantaged. Many times he had events at his dealership. He continued to do that. The Romero dealership continues to provide scholarships for students. The Romero family is here, his son, R.J. Romero is here, and I am sure that they will continue the same tradition to improve the quality of life for all Americans.

INACTON OF BUSH ADMINISTRATION WORSENS ENERGY CRISIS IN CALIFORNIA

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) had it exactly wrong. The fact of the matter is that in California, we are using less energy than we did in 1998. In 1998, we paid \$7 billion for that energy and today, we are paying 70, 7-0, \$70 billion, ten times as much. Why? Because the Bush administration refuses to tell the Federal Energy Commission to enforce the Federal law for just and reasonable wholesale prices.

So the people of California who have an energy shortage because of a bad deregulation plan, because we have not built as many generators as we should, and because of a drought in the northwest, are now open to price gouging and profiteering by the energy companies.

The Federal Energy Commission has made that finding. It is not my finding, it is their finding, that these prices are not just and reasonable, but they refuse to enforce the law to put caps on at a just and reasonable price so that

the energy companies will get their 15 or 20 percent return. They simply will not get to continue to gouge the people of California, the small businesses, the large businesses, people in hospitals who are having the lights go out, their life support systems turned off because of the Bush administration's inaction.

MORE FLEXIBILITY FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

(Mr. HOEKSTRA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, technology can be a powerful means of increasing student achievement. State and local school districts are already experimenting with promising technology programs from on-line research services to distance learning initiatives. Such innovations, telecommunications and information technology programs at school libraries, for example, should be encouraged and bolstered by Federal funding.

One of the things that we know is that school districts need flexibility. Later on today as we consider the President's education plan, I will offer an amendment to allow school districts more flexibility to move money between programs. One of the programs that they will be able to move more money into is the technology area.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that my colleagues will support this flexibility for our local school districts.

ELECTION REFORM IS A PRIORITY FOR AMERICANS

(Ms. BROWN of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, election reform is a priority for the American people and it should be a priority for this Congress. We should never forget that 180,000 uncounted ballots were cast in Florida last November. Florida has not forgotten.

Unfortunately, election reform is not a priority with the Bush administration. The President's administration has shown no interest whatsoever in the issue of election reform. In fact, the budget that President Bush submitted to Congress provided no funds whatsoever to help States update their voting equipment.

We send people all over the world to monitor elections. If this Congress fails to act on election reform, we will forever lose our standing as the world democracy. Shame on us, Mr. Speaker.

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A CONTINUING ENERGY CRISIS

(Mr. EHLERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the energy issue we have be-

fore us. Remember back in 1973, when we had long lines at gas pumps? People were very upset. We engaged in a desperate effort to reduce our energy consumption and to do a better job of using our resources, but once the crisis was over, we forgot about it. Today we are facing a similar situation. If we do not get control of it, once again we will have long gas lines and high prices.

It is very important for us to remember a few things. Let me just speak as a physicist for a moment.

Energy is hard to understand. It is intangible. We cannot see or touch it. But two important things we have to remember throughout this crisis.

Number 1, energy is our most basic natural resource. Without energy, we cannot use any other natural resource. We cannot dig iron or copper out of the ground. We cannot smelt it or fabricate it unless we have energy. Energy is crucial to our economy.

The second major point to remember is that energy is our only non-recyclable resource. We must conserve energy. Once we use it, it is gone. We cannot consume all our resources and just assume the problem will go away.

SUPPORTING AMENDMENTS TO RESTORE FLEXIBILITY PORTIONS OF THE PRESIDENT'S EDUCATION PLAN

(Mr. SCHAFFER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, in just a few minutes the House will bring back up H.R. 1, the House version of the education proposal that was originally proposed by our President. In this document, Leave No Child Behind, it is a good document that the President proposed, a good balance with respect to how we should reform our schools for America.

What the President proposed was school choice, the hallmark of the Republican message on education, and also flexibility, and also, additional testing mandates. All that is left in the bill, however, at this point, as the House considers it, is really the testing mandates and some additional spending.

But today we have a unique opportunity here on the floor. That is to restore the core portions of the President's bill that have been taken out prior to the bill's arrival here on the House floor. We will have a chance to vote on amendments to allow children trapped in failing schools to escape those schools and go to institutions that offer more promise and opportunity, and we will have an opportunity to vote on a few amendments that restore some of the flexibility portions that the President had originally proposed.

I hope those amendments pass, because if we fail to add those important amendments back to the President's